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SIMCHAS TORAH.

(THE REJOICING OF THE LAW.)

From the Yiddish of J. L. Gordon.

LECHAYIM, my brethren, Lechayim, I say!
Health, peace, and good fortune I wish you to-day.
To-day we have ended the Torah once more,
To-day we begin it anew, as of yore.
Be thankful and glad and the Lord extol,
Who gave us the Law on its parchment scroll.

The Torah has been our consolation,
Our help in exile and sore privation.
Lost have we all we were wont to prize,
Our holy temple a ruin lies.
Laid waste is the land, where our songs we sung,
Forgotten our language, our mother-tongue.
Of kingdom and priesthood are we bereft,
Our faith is our only treasure left.
God in our hearts, the Law in our hands,
We have wandered sadly through many lands.
We have suffered much, yet, behold, we live
Through the comfort the Law alone can give.

Come, my dear brethren, come, let us look!
Quick, let us ope an historical book!
See, all the tales and the chronicles old,
They tell but of robbers and bandits bold.
World-wide is the scene of *our* story, and still
'Tis traced with a sword-point, instead of a quill.

The ink is of blood, mixed with tears of distress,
In exile, not Leipzig, it passed through the press;
No gilding it shows, and in iron 'tis bound.
Come, find me a corner, the universe round,
Where we met not with suff'ring and fierce oppression,
For the sake of the Torah, our sole possession.

In the very beginning, a long time ago,
We held up our heads with the best, as you know,
When householders sitting at home we were,
Nor needed the strangers' meal to share.
May none have to bear at the hands of men,
What we from our neighbours have borne since then.
How bitter, alas! was the lot we knew
When our neighbours to be our landlords grew,
And we were driven, by fate unkind,
Our lodging beneath their roof to find.
How did we live then? How did we rest?
Ask not, I pray you, for silence is best,
Like cabbage heads, hither and thither that fall,
With the holy Law, that we treasured through all.

Two thousand years, a little thing when spoken,
Two thousand years tormented, crushed, and broken!
Seven and seventy dark generations,
Filled up with anguish and lamentations.
Their tale of sorrow, did I unfold,
No Simchas Torah to-day we'd hold.
And why should I tell it you all again?
In our bones 'tis branded with fire and pain.
We have sacrificed all. We have given our wealth,
Our homes, our honours, our land, our health,
Our lives—like Hannah her children seven—
For the sake of the Torah that came from heaven.

And now, what next? Will they let us be?
Have the nations then come at last to see
That we Jews are men like the rest, and no more

Need we wander homeless as heretofore,
Abused and slandered wherever we go?
Ah! I cannot tell you, but this I know,
That the same God still lives in heaven above,
And on earth the same Law, the same Faith, that we love.
Then fear not, and weep not, but hope in the Lord,
And the sacred Torah, his holy word.

Lechayim, my brethren, Lechayim, I say!
Health, peace, and good fortune I wish you to-day.
To-day we have ended the Torah once more,
To-day we begin it again as of yore.
Be thankful and glad and the Lord extol,
Who gave us the Law on its parchment scroll.

ALICE LUCAS AND HELENA FRANK.